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INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE: MAPPING PREDICTORS OF WORK–LIFE BALANCE IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Work–life balance (WLB) has emerged as a central concern in organizational behaviour research, driven by changing workforce demographics, rising job demands, and increasing work intensification across industries. Early scholarship conceptualized WLB as the dynamic interaction between work and family domains, highlighting how competing demands influence individual well-being and functioning (Takami, 2021). As organizational structures evolved, researchers recognized that employees navigate overlapping roles, making the balance between personal and professional spheres increasingly complex (Hall & Richter, 1988). The rise of dual-earner households further amplified this complexity, causing work and family pressures to spill over across domains (Maharani & Tomara, 2024).

The pharmaceutical industry is characterized by high job demands, regulatory pressures, round-the-clock production cycles, and demanding work schedules, all which place employees at heightened risk of stress and imbalance. Extensive research has shown that work stress significantly affects employee health, job satisfaction, and organizational outcomes (Kshirsagar, 2018). Within this context, internal factors such as personal values, resilience, time-management, and health behaviours interact with external factors such as workload, supervisory support, technological expectations, and organizational culture to shape employees' perceptions of balance (Kedia et al.,2023).

The literature suggests that imbalance often manifests as burnout, fatigue, role conflict, and job stress, which in turn influence job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Kelliher et al., 2019). Role ambiguity and role conflict are particularly pronounced in demanding sectors, significantly contributing to stress and reduced job satisfaction. In industries such as pharmaceuticals, where employees often work extended hours and face stringent deadlines, these stressors can be particularly pronounced (Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020). Recent studies further highlight how technology proliferation, remote communication, and digital monitoring intensify both work demands and expectations of availability, complicating the ability to maintain equilibrium (Panda & Radhakrishnan, 2017; Duan et al., 2023).

Despite a rich global literature, empirical studies focusing specifically on the internal and external predictors of WLB in India's pharmaceutical sector, particularly at the district level, remain limited. District Solan in Himachal Pradesh hosts one of the largest pharmaceutical manufacturing clusters in Asia, characterized by heavy workloads, shift operations, and high employment density. Yet scholarly inquiry into how employees in this region perceive and manage work–life balance is scarce. Addressing this research gap, the present study aims to systematically examine the individual-level (internal) and organizational-environmental

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(external) factors influencing WLB, assess the prevalence of WLB problems, and explore how these shape overall job satisfaction.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RESEARCH GAP

The concept of work–life balance (WLB) has evolved significantly over the past five decades, gaining prominence as organizations worldwide confront the challenges of rising job demands, increased competition, and shifting demographic patterns that redefine employee expectations and workplace dynamics. Early foundational work highlighted the overlapping nature of work and family domains, illustrating how individuals experience tension, conflict, and emotional strain when these spheres intersect (Gragnano et al., 2020). In subsequent years, extensive research on workplace stress highlighted that escalating job pressures, role overload, and role ambiguity could severely undermine employee health and well-being, making WLB a critical organizational concern (Astuti et al., 2024). Within this theoretical landscape, scholars have noted that perceived job flexibility plays a crucial role in alleviating role conflict and enhancing feelings of balance. Duan et al. (2023) found that employees with greater control over their schedules tend to experience heightened satisfaction in both family and work domains.

As WLB gained academic and managerial attention, research increasingly focused on the antecedents, predictors, and consequences of work–family conflict and balance. Kshirsagar (2018) highlighted that work–family balance is a multidimensional construct shaped by individual circumstances, job-related characteristics, and broader organizational culture. Meta-analytic evidence by Limanta et al., (2023) further established that job demands, role conflict, role ambiguity, and lack of supervisory support are consistent predictors of work–family conflict across sectors. As conceptual understanding matured, scholars argued that WLB cannot be reduced to simplistic measures of time allocation but must instead be examined as a holistic construct integrating well-being, satisfaction, and perceived role fulfillment (Okayasu et al., 2020). Panda and Radhakrishnan (2017) similarly suggested that WLB represents an individual's holistic appraisal of harmony across domains, influenced by both internal drivers, such as personality traits, values, and time-management abilities, and external drivers, including job conditions, workplace norms, leadership behaviours, and technological pressures. Empirical studies also established strong linkages between WLB and burnout, showing that employees experiencing imbalance tend to suffer from emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced job satisfaction (Sandhya, 2024). These findings were reinforced by evidence that household structures and family circumstances influence the degree of support individuals require, indicating that organisational interventions must adopt a differentiated rather than a one-size-fits-all approach (Sani & Adisa, 2024). Role conflict and ambiguity have also emerged as critical antecedents of job dissatisfaction, as shown in research on nurse executives (Takami, 2021) and various other occupational groups, where vague expectations and conflicting responsibilities intensify stress and reduce well-being.

Although past studies highlight the role of individual factors, organizational conditions, and job stress in shaping work–life balance (Rao & Shaik, 2019), limited research examines these determinants together within the pharmaceutical industry, a sector known for heavy workloads and shift pressures. Existing literature rarely integrates internal and external predictors, nor does it assess the actual prevalence of burnout, fatigue, overtime, and work–life conflict among pharmaceutical employees in India. This gap underscores the need for a comprehensive study that explores individual-level factors, organizational influences, and the extent of WLB challenges, which the present research aims to address.

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3. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Employees in the pharmaceutical industry often face intense job demands, shift-based work, regulatory pressures, and increasing technological expectations, all of which create significant challenges in maintaining a healthy work–life balance. Existing studies highlight the impact of role conflict, stress, and organizational factors on employee well-being, yet limited research has explored these dynamics within the Indian pharmaceutical context, particularly in District Solan. Moreover, the combined influence of internal individual factors and external organizational conditions on work–life balance remains insufficiently understood. This study therefore seeks to identify key predictors of work–life balance and assess the prevalence of related challenges among pharmaceutical employees.

3.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the internal (individual-level) factors influencing work–life balance among pharmaceutical employees.
2. To analyze the external (organizational and environmental) factors affecting employees' ability to maintain work–life balance.
3. To assess the prevalence of work–life balance challenges, including burnout, fatigue, overtime, job stress, absenteeism, turnover intentions, and work–life conflict.

4. METHODOLOGY USED

The study employs a descriptive and empirical research design to examine the internal and external factors influencing work–life balance among employees working in the pharmaceutical industry in District Solan, Himachal Pradesh. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a purposive sample of 300 employees selected from pharmaceutical units across Baddi, Nalagarh, Parwanoo, and Solan. The questionnaire captured individual-level factors, organizational influences, and the prevalence of work–life balance challenges. A proportionate sampling approach ensured representation from major industrial clusters. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability testing, correlation, and regression techniques to identify significant predictors of work–life balance and associated employee outcomes.

5. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Table 1 summarizes the demographics of 300 pharmaceutical employees and provides important context for understanding their work–life balance. The workforce is male-dominated (66%), and most employees are young to mid-career, with 42.7% aged 25–34 and 28.7% aged 35–44, indicating a group likely managing both career growth and family responsibilities. This is supported by the fact that 68% are married. The educational profile indicates a skilled workforce, which may lead to increased career pressures. Most employees have 1–10 years of experience and work in operational roles (41.3% workers/operators), suggesting exposure to demanding schedules. Additionally, 44% work rotational shifts and 10%-night shifts, both known contributors to stress and work–family conflict. With 74.7% in permanent positions, employees may also experience long-term job-related pressures. These demographic patterns highlight a workforce potentially prone to work–life balance challenges.

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Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 300)

S. No.	Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	**Gender**	Male	**198**	**66.0%**
		Female	**102**	**34.0%**
2	**Age Group**	Below 25 years	**42**	**14.0%**
		25–34 years	**128**	**42.7%**
		35–44 years	**86**	**28.7%**
		45–54 years	**32**	**10.7%**
		55 years & above	**12**	**4.0%**
3	**Marital Status**	Single	**96**	**32.0%**
		Married	**204**	**68.0%**
4	**Educational Qualification**	Diploma	**72**	**24.0%**
		Graduate	**134**	**44.7%**
		Postgraduate	**58**	**19.3%**
		Professional Degree	**24**	**8.0%**
		Other	**12**	**4.0%**
5	**Work Experience**	Less than 1 year	**28**	**9.3%**
		1–5 years	**112**	**37.3%**
		6–10 years	**94**	**31.3%**
		11–15 years	**46**	**15.3%**
		More than 15 years	**20**	**6.7%**
6	**Designation**	Worker/Operator	**124**	**41.3%**
		Supervisor	**62**	**20.7%**
		Executive	**70**	**23.3%**
		Manager	**32**	**10.7%**
		Senior Manager	**12**	**4.0%**
7	**Work Shift**	Day Shift	**138**	**46.0%**
		Rotational Shift	**132**	**44.0%**
		Night Shift	**30**	**10.0%**
8	**Nature of Employment**	Permanent	**224**	**74.7%**
		Contractual	**76**	**25.3%**

Table 2 presents the reliability results for the study constructs, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha, which assesses internal consistency among survey items. The internal (individual-level) factors demonstrate a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82, indicating strong internal reliability and suggesting that the items consistently measure employees' personal attributes related to work–life balance. External (organizational and environmental) factors show a reliability coefficient of 0.78, which falls within the acceptable-to-good range and confirms the suitability of these items for further analysis. The work–life balance (WLB) challenges construct exhibits an alpha of 0.85, indicating high reliability and stability in measuring stress, burnout, fatigue, overtime, and conflict-related variables. The overall scale comprising all 30 items yields an alpha of 0.88, demonstrating very high internal consistency across all measurement dimensions. These reliability results confirm that the questionnaire is statistically sound, trustworthy, and appropriate for examining relationships between internal factors, external factors, and work–life balance outcomes.

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Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha — Reliability Table

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Internal (Individual-level factors)	10	**0.82**	Good (reliable)
External (Organizational & environmental)	10	**0.78**	Acceptable to good
WLB Challenges	10	**0.85**	Good (reliable)
Overall Scale	30	**0.88**	Very good

5.1 Internal Factors Influencing Work–Life Balance

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for internal factors influencing work–life balance among pharmaceutical employees. The results show moderate agreement across most internal factors, with the highest mean scores observed for Values (3.62), Personality Traits (3.50), and Habits/Discipline (3.46), suggesting that employees' personal principles, stable personality characteristics, and disciplined routines positively support work–life balance. Self-Management (3.41) and Time-Management (3.27) also scored moderately high, indicating that employees generally possess the ability to organize their tasks and manage time effectively, which is essential in demanding industrial settings. Lower mean scores for Family Responsibilities (2.99) and Career Orientation (2.91) imply that family pressures and career-driven ambitions may sometimes challenge employees' ability to maintain balance. The overall work–life balance score of 3.02 reflects a moderate level of balance, highlighting that internal personal attributes play a meaningful but not entirely sufficient role in helping employees cope with work-related demands. These findings demonstrate that while internal strengths contribute to work–life stability, employees may still face difficulties when personal and professional responsibilities compete.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics — Internal Factors (n = 300)

Internal Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation
Values	3.62	0.84
Beliefs	3.34	0.80
Health & Well-being	3.21	0.84
Personality Traits	3.50	0.83
Time-Management	3.27	0.89
Family Responsibilities	2.99	0.80
Career Orientation	2.91	0.80
Self-Management	3.41	0.80
Task Organization	3.17	0.81
Habits / Discipline	3.46	0.80
Overall Work–Life Balance Score	**3.02**	**0.64**

Table 4 indicates that all internal factors show positive correlations with overall work–life balance, meaning stronger personal capabilities are associated with better balance among pharmaceutical employees. The strongest correlations, Task Organisation, Values, Habits/Discipline, and Health & Well-being, suggest that employees who stay organised, uphold strong values, maintain discipline, and remain healthy, manage work and personal demands more effectively. Moderate relationships for Personality Traits, Self-Management,

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and Time-Management highlight the importance of stability and planning skills. Family Responsibilities and Career Orientation show weaker correlations, suggesting that while they influence balance, their effect is less pronounced in a high-pressure industrial setting. Overall, these findings confirm that internal personal strengths play a significant role in shaping work–life balance, although they may not fully counterbalance demanding workplace conditions.

Table 4: Correlation with WLB (Pearson's r)

Item	Pearson r with WLB
(Values)	0.373
(Beliefs)	0.306
(Health & well-being)	0.372
(Personality traits)	0.328
(Time-management)	0.298
(Family responsibilities)	0.221
(Career orientation)	0.183
(Self-management)	0.339
(Task organization)	0.402
(Habits/discipline)	0.375

Table 5 shows that internal factors explain 39% of the variance in employees' work-life balance ($R^2 = 0.390$), confirming the significant role of individual characteristics. Significant predictors, Values, Health & Well-being, Personality Traits, Self-Management, and Task Organization, indicate that employees who maintain strong personal principles, good health, stable personality traits, effective self-regulation, and organized work habits experience better work–life balance. Other factors, such as Beliefs, time management, Family Responsibilities, Career Orientation, and Habits/Discipline, were not significant when considered with other predictors, suggesting their influence is weaker in comparison.

Table 5: Multiple Regression — Predicting WLB from Internal Factors

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.288	1.379	0.169
(Values)	**0.125**	**3.230**	**0.001**
(Beliefs)	0.066	1.611	0.108
(Health & well-being)	**0.096**	**2.390**	**0.017**
(Personality traits)	**0.079**	**1.987**	**0.048**
(Time-management)	0.060	1.586	0.114
(Family responsibilities)	0.057	1.429	0.154
(Career orientation)	0.031	0.761	0.447
(Self-management)	**0.110**	**2.491**	**0.013**
(Task organization)	**0.111**	**2.667**	**0.008**
(Habits/discipline)	0.081	1.908	0.057
Model summary: R^2 = **0.390** (Model explains ~39.0% of variance in WLB)			

These findings show that internal personal strengths contribute to better balance, but they alone may not offset workplace pressures, emphasizing the importance of examining external organizational factors in subsequent objectives.

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5.2 External Predictors of Work–Life Balance

Table 6 shows that external demands such as technological pressure (M = 3.53), job demands interference (M = 3.48), and socio-economic pressure (M = 3.44) are relatively high, indicating that employees face substantial workplace and financial pressures affecting work–life balance. Meanwhile, flexibility policies scored lowest (M = 2.96), suggesting limited organizational support for schedule adjustments. Moderate scores for supervisor support and a supportive work environment reflect some level of positive workplace practices. Overall, these results indicate that employees work in a demanding environment where organizational support exists but may not be sufficient to counteract operational pressures.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of External Factors

External Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation
Workload Reasonableness	3.12	0.89
Job Demands Interference	3.48	0.82
Role Clarity	3.26	0.84
Supervisor Support	3.41	0.90
Organizational Work–Life Balance Culture	3.18	0.87
Flexibility Policies	2.96	0.85
Technological Pressure	3.53	0.78
Availability of Resources	3.29	0.81
Supportive Work Environment	3.37	0.83
Socio-economic Pressure	3.44	0.79
Overall Work–Life Balance Score	**3.02**	**0.64**

Table 7 reveals strong positive correlations between work–life balance and factors like supervisor support (r = 0.411), supportive work environment (r = 0.402), and flexibility policies (r = 0.376), showing that supportive organizational practices enhance balance. In contrast, job demands (r = –0.341), technological pressure (r = –0.318), and socio-economic pressure (r = –0.251) significantly reduce WLB. These findings suggest that both supportive and pressure-related external factors significantly impact employees' ability to balance work and personal life.

Table 7: Correlation Between External Factors and Work–Life Balance

External Factor	Correlation with WLB (r)	Significance (p)
Workload Reasonableness	0.322	0.000
Job Demands Interference	–0.341	0.000
Role Clarity	0.294	0.000
Supervisor Support	0.411	0.000
Organizational WLB Culture	0.357	0.000
Flexibility Policies	0.376	0.000
Technological Pressure	–0.318	0.000
Availability of Resources	0.336	0.000
Supportive Work Environment	0.402	0.000
Socio-economic Pressure	–0.251	0.001

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Table 8 shows that external factors account for 45.2% of the variance in work–life balance, confirming their significant influence. Positive predictors, such as supervisor support, flexibility policies, supportive work environment, organizational culture, and availability of resources, highlight the importance of supportive organizational practices. Negative predictors, such as job demands and technological pressure, indicate that heavy workloads and constant connectivity can hinder work-life balance. These results demonstrate that improving workplace support and reducing pressure can significantly enhance employee work–life balance.

Table 8: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Work–Life Balance from External Factors

External Factor	Coefficient (B)	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.512	2.410	0.017
Workload Reasonableness	0.088	2.035	0.043
Job Demands Interference	–0.113	–2.910	0.004
Role Clarity	0.067	1.622	0.106
Supervisor Support	**0.152**	**3.985**	**0.000**
Organizational WLB Culture	0.091	2.120	0.035
Flexibility Policies	**0.138**	**3.327**	**0.001**
Technological Pressure	–0.097	–2.401	0.017
Availability of Resources	0.084	2.003	0.046
Supportive Work Environment	**0.129**	**3.214**	**0.002**
Socio-economic Pressure	–0.062	–1.521	0.129
Model summary: R^2 = **0.452** (Model explains ~45.2% of variance in WLB)			

5.3 Prevalence of Work–Life Balance Challenges

Table 9 shows the prevalence of work–life balance challenges among employees, with high mean scores for overtime frequency (M = 3.68), job stress (M = 3.61), difficulty disconnecting from work (M = 3.64), and impact on health (M = 3.58). These results indicate that employees routinely face long working hours, stress, and difficulty mentally disengaging from work, which collectively affect their well-being. Emotional exhaustion (M = 3.42) and work-to-family conflict (M = 3.47) are also prevalent, indicating that work pressures often spill over into personal life. Lower scores for absenteeism (M = 2.88) and turnover intentions (M = 3.12) indicate that although employees experience stress and fatigue, they may not immediately consider leaving their jobs. Overall, the mean WLB challenge score of 3.40 indicates a moderate to high level of work–life imbalance across the workforce.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of Work–Life Balance Challenges

WLB Challenge	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Exhaustion / Burnout	3.42	0.92
Physical Fatigue	3.55	0.88
Overtime Frequency	3.68	0.84
Job Stress	3.61	0.89

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Work-to-Family Conflict	3.47	0.86
Family-to-Work Conflict	3.09	0.80
Absenteeism Intentions	2.88	0.77
Turnover Intentions	3.12	0.82
Impact on Health & Well-being	3.58	0.90
Difficulty Disconnecting from Work	3.64	0.88
Overall WLB Challenge Score	**3.40**	**0.72**

Table 10 demonstrates strong negative correlations between work–life balance and several challenges, with the strongest being work-to-family conflict (r = –0.536), job stress (r = –0.512), and health impacts (r = –0.498). This indicates that as stress, conflict, and health deterioration increase, work–life balance significantly declines. Burnout, difficulty disconnecting from work, and overtime frequency also show substantial negative correlations, emphasizing their detrimental role in disrupting balance. Even moderate challenges such as absenteeism intentions and turnover intentions negatively affect WLB. These results clearly show that work-related strain and spillover into family life are key drivers of imbalance

Table 10: Correlation Between Work–Life Balance Challenges and Overall Work–Life Balance

WLB Challenge	Correlation with WLB (r)	Significance (p)
Emotional Exhaustion / Burnout	–0.462	0.000
Physical Fatigue	–0.401	0.000
Overtime Frequency	–0.447	0.000
Job Stress	–0.512	0.000
Work-to-Family Conflict	–0.536	0.000
Family-to-Work Conflict	–0.392	0.000
Absenteeism Intentions	–0.334	0.000
Turnover Intentions	–0.371	0.000
Impact on Health & Well-being	–0.498	0.000
Difficulty Disconnecting from Work	–0.459	0.000

Table 11 reveals that work–life balance challenges account for 55.1% of the variance in overall WLB ($R^2 = 0.551$), indicating a strong predictive influence. Significant negative predictors include work-to-family conflict, job stress, emotional exhaustion, impact on health, overtime frequency, and difficulty disconnecting from work. These results highlight that employees who experience greater stress, longer working hours, difficulty switching off from work, and declining health are far more likely to struggle with work–life balance. Other challenges, such as family-to-work conflict, absenteeism, and turnover intentions, were not significant when considered alongside stronger predictors. Overall, these findings indicate that work pressure, stress spillover, and health impacts are significant determinants of poor work–life balance.

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Table 11: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Work–Life Balance from WLB Challenges

WLB Challenge	Coefficient (B)	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.612	3.092	0.002
Emotional Exhaustion / Burnout	–0.118	–3.045	0.003
Physical Fatigue	–0.072	–1.902	0.058
Overtime Frequency	–0.081	–2.249	0.025
Job Stress	**–0.164**	**–4.178**	**0.000**
Work-to-Family Conflict	**–0.179**	**–4.332**	**0.000**
Family-to-Work Conflict	–0.069	–1.756	0.080
Absenteeism Intentions	–0.041	–1.028	0.305
Turnover Intentions	–0.054	–1.437	0.152
Impact on Health & Well-being	–0.128	–3.237	0.001
Difficulty Disconnecting from Work	–0.096	–2.518	0.012
Model summary: R^2 = **0.551** (Model explains ~55.1% of variance in WLB)			

6. DISCUSSION & IMPLICATION

The study shows that work–life balance in the pharmaceutical industry is shaped by a combination of internal strengths, external organizational conditions, and prevalent workplace challenges. Internal factors such as values, health, self-management, and task organization contribute positively to balance, but their impact is limited when external pressures are high. External factors, especially supervisor support, flexibility policies, supportive work environment, and organizational culture, play a stronger role, demonstrating that employees rely heavily on workplace structures to manage work and personal roles. At the same time, widespread challenges such as overtime, job stress, burnout, work-to-family conflict, and difficulty disconnecting from work significantly reduce employees' ability to maintain balance. These findings suggest that improving work–lif balance requires reducing workplace pressures, strengthening managerial support, enhancing flexibility, and addressing concerns related to stress and well-being. Overall, both individual and organizational efforts are essential to create a healthier, more balanced work environment.

7. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study concludes that work–life balance among pharmaceutical employees is shaped by a combination of individual attributes, organizational practices, and workplace challenges, with external factors such as supervisor support, flexibility policies, and work environment exerting the strongest influence. Based on the findings, organisations should prioritize reducing excessive job demands, introducing flexible work arrangements, enhancing supervisory support, and strengthening health and well-being initiatives to improve employees' ability to balance work and personal life. At the individual level, interventions that build self-management, task-organization skills, and well-being awareness may further support balance. While the study provides valuable insights, future research could expand to multiple regions or industries, include longitudinal analysis to observe changes over time, and incorporate qualitative methods to capture deeper employee experiences. Such studies would strengthen understanding of how work–life balance evolves and help develop more targeted organizational strategies.

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